

2006 Local Accomplishments

AID FOR TOWNS IN THE 5TH SENATE DISTRICT

A very important part of my job representing the people of the 5th state Senate District is ensuring Bloomfield, Burlington, Farmington and West Hartford receive their fair share of state funding. I am pleased to report the following grants and reimbursements from the state:

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Total Education Grants | \$20,955,328 |
| Extra 2006 Property Tax Relief | \$322,025 |
| Town Aid Road Fund (TAR) | \$842,182 |
| Mashantucket Pequot/Mohegan Grants | \$1,109,585 |
| Local Capital Improvements (LoCIP) | \$777,440 |
| Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) | \$5,186,269 |
| Total Statutory Formula Grants | \$29,192,830 |

Further Protections for Open Space

Land is often donated to land trusts because of its inherent natural value. Too often, stewards of this land are shocked to discover an adjacent landowner has removed trees or encroached on these preserved lands in other ways. I helped pass a bill which will discourage the practice of encroachment on land trusts and open space. Now, landowners can bring actions against violators in court to help recover the costs of restoring the open space to its original condition for all to enjoy.

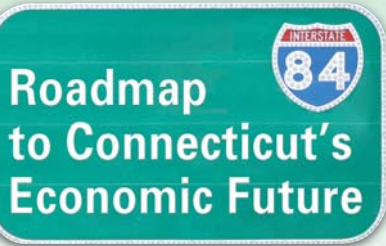


A Revaluation Fix

This session, legislation was passed that allows municipalities to freeze property taxes on homes owned by eligible elderly people and also allows towns to adopt a 5-year phase-in of its real estate revaluation. A town can choose to implement all of its assessment increase in one year or increase it at various rates over the course of five years. At the end of 5 years, all property in town must be at the state-mandated property assessment ratio of 70%, i.e., the relationship between a property's assessed value and its market value. This change will help alleviate the cost of dramatic increases in real estate values.

The gridlock that clogs our highways poses a significant threat to Connecticut's economic future. The General Assembly passed groundbreaking legislation that makes major investments in mass transit and plans for our future transportation infrastructure. This new act provides \$1 billion for targeted transportation projects and commits \$1.3 billion for future projects including:

- Creation of the New Haven to Springfield Commuter Rail, creation of the New Britain to Hartford Busway and significant improvements to branch lines, rail stations and parking facilities on the New Haven line and Shoreline East
- The commissioning of several studies regarding the current state of our infrastructure and potential new initiatives including targeted road expansions and commuter rail in Eastern Connecticut (New London to Worcester)
- The authorization of the use of state dollars to encourage transit-oriented development and locating of businesses near mass transit



A Message to My Constituents



Dear Neighbors,

On May 3rd, the 2006 legislative session came to a close. Our state Constitution dictates the beginning and closing times for each legislative session, and this year was the shortest possible—only 85 days. In this short time, the General Assembly passed significant initiatives to make Connecticut a better place to work, live and educate our children. I have included some highlights of the session in this newsletter.

I am especially proud that a bipartisan budget was adopted that provides tax relief for automobiles, real estate and businesses while returning money to cities and towns to help hold down local property taxes. This includes an increase—from \$400 to \$500—on the state property tax credit.

Please let me know if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Harris
State Senator, 5th District

Stay Informed...

For the latest information on the issues affecting your district, please visit my Web site:
www.senatedems.ct.gov/Harris.html



TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION on any of the following issues, fill out this form and mail it to me, e-mail or call my office. Make sure to give your name and mailing address and indicate which issues you're interested in. My contact information is on the mailing address panel.

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors | <input type="checkbox"/> Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Children | <input type="checkbox"/> Municipalities |

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____



State Senator
Jonathan Harris

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I'm proud
to represent
the 5th state
Senate District
which includes
the communities
of Bloomfield,
Burlington,
Farmington and
West Hartford



CONNECTICUT JOBS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

2006 Legislative Initiatives

A recent study shocked many in the state with the information that since 1991, Connecticut has experienced no net job growth. My Senate Democratic colleagues and I initiated a comprehensive plan to address the need for job growth in order to help the private sector create a brighter future. Our legislative package invests in education, jobs, university/business partnerships, transportation improvements, and the promotion of promising fuel cell technologies that have been developed right here in our own backyard.

Highlights of our successful initiatives include:

- **Elimination of the Manufacturing Machinery and Equipment property tax** to attract more manufacturing jobs to Connecticut, especially the cutting-edge, precision manufacturing that is critical to our future economy
- **Tax incentives to attract movie companies** to film their productions here in Connecticut
- **Linking promising new businesses to the university expertise** that can help bring innovative products to market
- **A Center for Entrepreneurship** that will assist promising technologies—including fuel cells—develop right here in our state
- **More funding for incumbent worker training programs**, provided by regional workforce development boards, to help workers learn new and valuable skills
- **Creation of business incubators to help grow the small business ideas** that will fuel our future economy and improve job creation across the state
- **Development Research and Economic Assistance Matching (DREAM) grants** that supplement and increase small businesses' access to federal research grants
- **A Business Advocate's office** to serve as a one-stop contact point for businesses to access government assistance and cut through red tape
- **Encouraging more engineering and doctoral research graduates to stay and work in Connecticut** through a 'Scholar-to-Work' system which ensures that innovation and creativity will remain a hallmark of Connecticut's future in the growing world marketplace
- **Partnerships between local schools and businesses** to help more students master math and science as building blocks to careers in competitive fields
- **Teacher 'externships'** that help link the skills taught in classrooms to those sought by employers, and providing opportunities for students to participate in internship and job-shadow experiences that will help them build relevant job skills
- **Asserting Connecticut's position as a global leader in the fuel cell industry** by improving clean energy alternatives in ways that grow jobs in this highly skilled sector
- **Promoting nanotechnology**—an industry that works at the molecular level—to establish Connecticut as a leader in developing complex materials sold to businesses around the world

STATE SENATOR JONATHAN HARRIS 5TH DISTRICT

Working for Connecticut's Future



Recognizing Our Veterans

The debt owed our state's veterans can never be paid in full. During the 2006 session, the legislature continued

to recognize the service of our brave men and women by passing new laws aimed at paying part of this debt. These new laws include exempting disability payments from determining eligibility for certain income-based property tax exemptions for veterans, extending the same protections to state service members assigned to state duties as they would be entitled to on federal duty, and expanding the definition of veteran to include reservists and National Guardsmen.

Banning Internet or E-mail "Phishing"

The legislature adopted tough standards regarding the use of the Internet or e-mail messaging—known as "phishing"—to obtain a person's identifying information by posing as an online business. The attorney general or victims of phishing may sue to recover damages and restrain the offender from further violations. Courts may award up to \$25,000 or actual damages, whichever is greater. If the offender is found to be a persistent violator, the court may award triple damages.

Reaction to Tragedy in Sudan

The tragedy in Sudan has resulted in more than 3 million Sudanese displaced and 400,000 dead. We acted to halt state investments that could benefit the Sudanese government responsible for genocide, rape and starvation

in the Darfur region of this beleaguered African country. By joining with universities, other states and countries to increase international economic pressure, Connecticut can play a role in stopping the shameful actions of the Sudanese government.

Clean Cars

The increased concentration of greenhouse gases—including carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides—in our atmosphere has the potential to negatively affect our climate. Since our vehicles emit these harmful gases, we passed legislation establishing a labeling program for new cars sold or leased for model years 2009 or later. The label will include a "greenhouse gas score" to help educate consumers on which vehicles are more environmentally sound and which have less of a detrimental impact.



Energy Efficiency

To help residents with energy costs, we passed legislation last October that exempted certain weatherization products—such as insulation, programmable thermostats, and energy-efficient furnaces and boilers—from the state sales tax. This session, we extended the exemption until June 30, 2007. We also passed legislation that requires certain state construction projects to meet stricter energy and environmental standards. This will help save state taxpayers money while promoting energy efficiency.

Health Insurance Coverage for Breast Cancer Screening

Early and accurate diagnosis is the key to the most effective treatment of breast cancer. Under new legislation we passed this year, certain insurance companies will be required to cover comprehensive ultrasound screening for women with increased risk factors for breast cancer, as well as those whose mammograms indicate dense breast tissue. This law will help more women gain access to the best screening tools. Not only will it save lives, it could save tax dollars down the road.

Campaign Finance Reform and Ethics

We continued to strengthen our ethics laws in response to unprecedented corruption that occurred in our state. Legislation this year prohibits a governor's spouse from receiving honoraria and bans a governor from lobbying the state for at least one year after leaving office. We also continued to improve our strongest-in-the-nation campaign finance reform legislation by protecting the system's integrity in the event of a court challenge and further limiting political action committees (PACs).

Mandatory Minimum Sentences for Sexual Assault

There must be zero tolerance for sexual predators who prey on our children. The state Senate passed a bill this session that would have toughened the laws against these dangerous individuals. This bill would have increased the minimum mandatory sentence to 25 years in prison for first degree sexual assault against those under the age of 16 and would have put these criminals away for life if they were convicted twice of assaulting someone under the age of 13. In addition, this legislation would have created a minimum 25 year sentence for someone promoting the prostitution of someone under the age of 13 years of age. Unfortunately, this bill was not enacted into law.

Taking a Stand Against Underage Drinking



House parties pose a significant risk to our young people who consume alcohol on private property. The General Assembly passed a new law this session that makes it a crime to knowingly allow underage drinking on your private property (or to do nothing to stop such activity.) This legislation also extends the law prohibiting the possession of alcohol by a minor on public property to all private property as well.

Healthy Food and Beverages in Schools



We listened to Connecticut's parents and doctors and fought to provide our students with healthier food and beverage choices. We passed landmark legislation that bans the sale of soda and other sugary drinks in schools. It also provides towns three times as much in school lunch aid from the state if they provide healthier choices for their students. This incentive will promote the better nutrition and healthier lifestyles our kids deserve.